

Running Women:
Gender and Strategic Communications in 2018 North Carolina Congressional Races

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ABSTRACT

The literature investigating how political campaigns strategize and frame messages in relation to gender is abundant and growing. As more women are elected to Congress and state houses across the country, the way that gender is portrayed in campaign content has never been more relevant. Using media from six 2018 North Carolina congressional campaigns, I performed a qualitative content analysis and a quantitative content analysis on 197 video advertisements, Facebook posts, Instagram posts and tweets. Confirming existing literature on attack advertisements, I find that male candidates are more likely to be attacked by their opponents than female candidates and that non-candidate men are more likely to be used as narrators in video advertisements overall but non-candidate women are more likely to be narrators in attack advertisements. My findings also support research indicating that female candidates are advised to dress more professionally than male candidates, as well as literature suggesting that women candidates are likely to capitalize on positive associations with change, empathy and honesty. Contradicting prior research, I find little to no relationship in the frequency with which male and female candidates are portrayed as parents and spouses by their campaigns. Lastly, my results suggest that campaigns running female candidates are more likely to publish content in which a majority of people of pictured are women and that campaigns with male candidates are more likely to publish content in which a majority of people pictured are men. Overall, I conclude that candidate gender is only one factor that interacts with many other variables.

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2019, 29-year-old Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez became the youngest woman elected to Congress in history (Ma & Relman, 2019). Her ideas and the story of her candidacy are just as groundbreaking. In the Democratic primary, she ousted 10-term veteran and Chair of the House Democratic Caucus Joe Crowley with almost 57 percent of the vote.

A self-declared democratic socialist, Ocasio-Cortez went door to door, running on progressive ideas such as Medicare-for-All, campaign finance reform (she refused to accept money from political action committees), a guaranteed jobs program and the abolition of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement also known as ICE. As a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, she represents a stark contrast to Crowley, a party insider and former fourth-ranking Democratic congressman who some projected to be the next Speaker of the House.

Before running for New York's 14th congressional district—a left-wing, minority-majority district that encompasses parts of the Bronx and Queens—Ocasio-Cortez had never run for political office. Less than a year before running, she worked as a bartender. Ocasio-Cortez uses social media platforms to connect with voters and her growing following across the country. It is in no way a stretch to say that Ocasio-Cortez ran on a platform of change—both as a political outsider and from a policy perspective. As a Millennial from a working class family, she represents a new face for the Democratic Party.

Another interesting takeaway about Ocasio-Cortez is that she does not diminish or hide her femininity: she wears bright red lipstick, and her original video ad launch features shots of her applying mascara and putting on high heels on a sidewalk before getting on the subway (Ma

& Relman, 2019). Kelly Dittmar's research found that the way women candidates play up or play down physical appearance depends on the context of the race (Dittmar, 2015). In 2018, Democratic women may be emphasizing their femininity to signal their contrast to the party in power and the person in the White House.

But Ocasio-Cortez is not the only nationally-known Democratic politician who is emphasizing femininity in her appearance. At January's congressional swearing in ceremony, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi wore a hot pink dress. The outfit choice led to plentiful media coverage, prompting New York Times chief fashion critic Vanessa Friedman to write an editorial entitled "Why Covering Nancy Pelosi's Hot Pink Dress Isn't Sexist" (Friedman, 2019). Friedman argues that the choice of color was a statement—both because of the way it pops in a room of dark suits and because of the color pink's deeply ingrained association with femininity (Friedman, 2019). Wearing a color traditionally associated with femininity while being sworn into the third highest political office in the United States is a symbolic move, Friedman states (Friedman, 2019). Ocasio-Cortez also made a statement about gender with her outfit choice that day, wearing all white to honor the suffragettes who fought for women's rights and made it possible for her to be a congresswoman.

Perhaps Pelosi's and Ocasio-Cortez's embrace of femininity in their physical presentation is symbolic of the progress women have made in the past year: The 2019-2021 Congress has more gender diversity than any Congress in history. For the first time ever, more than 100 women are in the House of Representatives (Shapiro, Shin, Gerhart, Epstein, & Ulmana, 2018). They come from a variety of backgrounds, but Democratic women are particularly well-represented (as is to be expected based on a historic trend in which the opposite party of the president gains control of the House in the first midterm election after the president takes office)

(Shapiro et. al, 2018). The so-called ‘Blue Wave’—which refers to Democrats taking back the House of Representatives, a shift in power that is largely attributed to dissatisfaction with President Donald Trump—meant historic progress for women running for Congress (Garber, 2018). Female representation in American politics has come a long way in the past 100 years. In 1917, Jeanette Rankin from Montana became the first woman in Congress (Women in Congress, 2018). While significant progress has been made in the past century, women still hold just over 23 percent of positions in the national legislative branch. Considering that more than half of the United States’ population is female, women would need to more than double their representation in Congress to reach equal representation.

It is important to note that while sex—what makes a person male or female—refers to a person’s anatomy, gender concerns a person’s identification as a man, woman or neither (Planned Parenthood). In other words, sex is defined at birth based on an individual’s genitalia and their sex chromosomes while gender relates to the way a person acts (Planned Parenthood). Gender expectations and roles vary across cultures while sex does not (Planned Parenthood). This study relates primarily to gender, although gender and sex are intertwined.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine if a candidate’s gender affects the media a campaign produces and the role of gender in campaign content more broadly. Does a candidate’s gender affect campaign content, the way that the candidate is portrayed and the types of messaging a campaign utilizes? How are women and men who are not the candidate represented in campaign content?

In my analysis of three 2018 North Carolina Congressional races in which at least one general election candidate from a major party was a woman, I reviewed 197 pieces of campaign content on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. I found that women and Democratic

candidates are more likely to publish content in which a majority of people are women and that men and Republican candidates are more likely to publish content in which a majority of people pictured are men. Additionally, female candidates were on average more likely to be pictured in professional clothing and only Democratic female candidates wore the color pink prominently in any content. Women were underrepresented as voiceover actors in video advertisements overall but overrepresented as voiceover actors in video attack advertisements. Men were more likely to be attacked by their opponents. There was not a significant difference in the frequency that campaigns portrayed their candidates as parents and spouses. Campaigns running women portrayed their candidates as empathetic more frequently and used change as a theme more often.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, I will examine research on women candidates, perceptions of female and male candidates and how gender functions in political advertising.

Portrayal of Female Candidates

In her 2015 book “Navigating Gendered Terrain,” Kelly Dittmar examines the role that gender plays in political strategy. She hits the topic from a variety of angles, looking at how gender affects campaign strategy in many contexts—from appealing to female voters to minimizing gender stereotypes for female candidates. Dittmar’s survey of political consultants on 2008 and 2010 gubernatorial and U.S. Senate campaigns elicited 233 responses, 84 of whom participated in a post-survey interview.

Dittmar reviews how the consultants surveyed think voters perceive gender differences in candidates. The results show that Republican and Democratic consultants alike think that voters hold gender stereotyped opinions about the traits and issue expertise attributed to male and female candidates. Consultants on both sides said voters associate characteristics such as ‘emotional,’ ‘compassionate’ and ‘cooperative’ more with female candidates and traits like ‘assertive,’ ‘tough,’ ‘corrupt,’ ‘experienced’ and ‘strong leader’ more with male candidates. Similarly, consultants on both sides think that voters perceive female candidates to have more expertise in social issues such as education, healthcare, social programs, the environment, immigration and family policy, whereas they believe voters associate male candidates with expertise in national security, defense, foreign policy and crime (Dittmar, 2015, pg. 24). Interestingly, Democratic consultants believe that voter stereotypes of gendered candidate traits and policy expertise are more pronounced than Republican consultants do. This could be

attributed to Democrats already being associated with femininity, which Republican female candidates can counteract more easily by being conservative (Dittmar, 2015, pg. 28). In terms of voter beliefs, Dittmar found that many campaign staffers said that because politics has historically been a space occupied by men, it can be hard for voters to visualize a woman in office. Institutional hurdles affect women in terms of both sexism from media and insiders showing a bias for male candidates (Dittmar, 2015, pg. 67). Likewise, consultants suggested that women had more to prove in terms of their credentials for office.

The literature on how voters actually perceive candidates is vast. One study shows that voters have a preference for candidates with lower voices, which is an obvious disadvantage for female candidates (Klofstad, 2015). This preference is particularly pronounced among voters who are older, more educated and more politically engaged (Klofstad, 2015). Notably, these groups are all more likely to vote. While this preference is actually not true for men running against women (in which case men with higher voices are preferred), it is true when comparing women with lower voices to women with higher voices (Klofstad, 2015). Other research shows that women politicians are most closely associated with the traits associated with professional women but are less associated with positive traits associated with female professionals like “ambitious” or “intelligent” (Schneider & Bos, 2013). Furthermore, female candidates seem to receive none of the benefits of associations with women without any advantages of masculine characteristics either (Schneider & Bos, 2015).

In “The Impact of Gender Stereotypes on Voting for Women Candidates by Level and Type of Office,” the authors ask voters which issues they think men and women politicians are more competent on, as well as which traits they associate with men and women (Dolan & Lynch, 2016). On almost all policies and characteristics, a majority of voters say “no difference” (Dolan

& Lynch, 2016). The only exceptions are abortion and child care policy, in which a majority of voters said that women are more competent (Dolan & Lynch, 2016). However, more people say that women are more competent on health care and child care than say the same for men (Dolan & Lynch, 2016). To the contrary, more voters said that men are more competent on the economy, the deficit, crime, national security and immigration (Dolan & Lynch, 2016). In terms of traits, 41.36 percent said they associate women more with compassion (although a majority said “no difference”) (Dolan & Lynch, 2016). More people said they associate candidates who are men with traits like decisiveness, consensus building, leadership and experience than women candidates (Dolan & Lynch, 2016). At the same time, more voters associated women candidates than men candidates with traits like intelligent and honest (Dolan & Lynch, 2016).

Dittmar next outlines how candidate gender affects strategy. Both Democratic and Republican candidates are more likely to say that picturing a candidate with his/her spouse or his/her young children is more effective for male candidates than female candidates. A female Democratic consultant even said that a female candidate pictured with her husband could “undermine a campaign message of strength and leadership” (Dittmar, 2015, pg. 43). While about 68 percent of Republican consultants said that featuring candidates in primarily professional clothes benefits both male and female candidates equally, a little more than half of Democratic consultants said that the strategy works better for female candidates (Dittmar, 2015, pg. 44). Dittmar’s findings show that Democratic women are especially encouraged to dress professionally. Additionally, she found that about a quarter of the consultants she interviewed think that female candidates are more scrutinized for the way that they look and must put more thought into their appearance for the campaign (Dittmar, 2015, pg. 104).

She outlines case studies of six races in which at least one of the general election candidates was a woman. Through interviews of practitioners, she details—through the lens of the consultant and, sometimes, the candidate—how gender affected particular elements of the campaign. According to her findings, campaign staffers repeatedly addressed the expectation of masculine qualities. Dittmar shows that campaigns used stories of breast cancer survival and prosecutorial experience to highlight how their female candidates are tough, strong leaders. On the contrary, Dittmar notes that more than half of her interviews suggest that consultants think there are certain advantages to being a female candidate, particularly when it comes to associations with honesty, authenticity and change. Campaigns used an association of female candidates with virtue and change to their advantage. For example, then-South Carolina gubernatorial candidate Nikki Haley was able to stand out in the Republican Party's primary as an Indian woman running against three white men. When accused of having an extramarital affair, some consultants said that the perception that Haley was a virtuous woman helped her deflect the allegations.

In chapter 6, Dittmar addresses how campaigns attempt to target female voters. According to her interviews, 78 percent of Democratic strategists and 59 percent of Republican strategists think that women's votes are "a priority when campaigning" (Dittmar, 2015, pg.130). Dittmar finds that when running against women, male candidates tend to use strategies to appeal to female voters, such as seeking endorsements from women, using their wife to reach out to women and bringing women's issues to the forefront. One Democratic male candidate capitalized on his pro-choice stance when running against a Republican woman. Alternatively, female candidates often capitalize on their gender when running by making appeals on women's

issues, evoking empathy, using female messengers and emphasizing “making history” (Dittmar, 2015, pg. 138).

Another way that campaigns signal that an advertisement is being targeted to women is through the gender composition of people in the advertisement. An article from Erin Cassese deduced that Joe Manchin’s campaign was attempting to appeal to men by showing no women in his video advertisements “Miners” and “Never Change” (Cassese, 2018). The advertisements, which show him talking one-on-one with working class white men, were “microtargeting” that demographic (Cassese, 2018).

Dittmar explains why negative campaigning presents a challenge for male candidates running against women. Men do not want to be branded as condescending or a bully, which consultants warn is a concern when running against a woman. Female candidates face conflicting advice about attacking their opponent. “Some practitioners maintained that women reduce electoral risk and unfriendly caricatures by avoiding negative attacks, while others argued that leaving the fight to male contenders feeds into preconceived notions of female weakness or victimhood” (Dittmar, 2015, pg. 154).

While Dittmar’s findings about consultants’ recommendations are interesting, they also show that consultants may not be the most aware of how voters actually perceive attacks. A 2017 study of a few hundred voters found that voters were less likely to report that they’d vote for a candidate after being attacked when the candidate was a woman (Cassese & Holman, 2017). While both men and women candidates were affected by negative attacks, women were more hurt. Also contrary to Dittmar’s study, Cassese and Holman’s study actually suggests that it might be more harmful for candidates to be attacked on not possessing traits and issues that are associated with their gender rather than attacks about how they lack characteristics of the

opposite gender (Cassese & Holman, 2017). Women candidates were more affected than male candidates were on attacks about masculine and feminine traits. Attacks on feminine-associated policies also hindered women candidates more than male candidates with voters; the only place where men seemed to suffer more than women was attacks on masculine issues (Cassese & Holman, 2017).

Dittmar's comprehensive look at the role of gender on political campaigns is helpful in many regards. The sample size is large, the subject is evaluated from a variety of angles and the book treats the topic with the nuance that it deserves. I believe I will confirm Dittmar's findings on how women are portrayed differently by their campaign—by emphasizing positive associations with women in office and deemphasizing negative ones—on policy issues, in portrayal of the candidate's personality and physical presentation.

The Color Pink

In “‘Not Just a Colour:’ pink as a gender and sexuality marker in visual communication,” Veronika Koller finds that the color pink is associated with femininity more than it is with any other characteristic (Koller, 2008). The color's association with femininity is deeply ingrained in western culture. In the study, 169 men and women were asked to say if they associate a word with the color pink. At 76.3 percent, ‘femininity’ was the most frequent association with pink (Koller, 2008). Also above 50 percent were romance (55.6 percent), sweetness (52.1 percent), softness (50.9 percent) and love (50.3 percent). While Koller's study primarily focuses on the use of pink in visual texts, the associations of the color are not limited to magazines. She finds that the use of the color also attracts attention—particularly of women (Koller, 2008). She argues that pink's attention-grabbing ability for women is also why it is worn by men in heterosexual

dating (Koller, 2008). Although the article does not directly concern political advertising, it does suggest that advertisers use pink to stand out, attract women's attention in particular and associate the advertisement with femininity.

Gender in Political Advertisement Voiceovers

Using a sample of 7,114 political video advertisements for U.S. House and Senate races from 2010 and 2012, researchers sought to discover the breakdown of gender voiceovers in political advertisements (Starber, Zuler, Fowler, Ridout, & Searles, 2015).. They found that 45.6 percent of advertisements used just a male voiceover while 20.1 percent of advertisements used just a female voiceover; this means that for every one ad with a female voiceover, there were more than two ads with a male voiceover (Starber et al., 2015). Further, female voiceovers were much more likely to be used in attack advertising (Starber et al., 2015). The authors speculated that ads with female voiceovers softened attack ads, decreasing the likelihood of backlash (Starber et al., 2015).

A 2016 study from Duke University Reporters' Lab study confirmed the research of Starber et al. The team looked at political video campaign ads from September to November 2016 (Turken, 2016). The team found that 138 ads in the period had male voiceovers while 118 had female voiceovers (Turken, 2016). While the advertisements were mostly negative as a whole, ads with female voiceovers were less likely to be positive—with just 12 supporting a candidate (Turken, 2016). For male candidates, this was slightly higher at 29 of 138 ads featuring a male voiceover (Turken, 2016).

Discussion

Although her results are based on elections from several years ago, it is reasonable to assume that many of Dittmar's findings hold true in the 2018 election cycle, as women are still underrepresented in political office. I expect that many women—especially Democratic women—who ran in 2018 capitalized on positive gender stereotypes, especially women's association with change, honesty and trustworthiness. This makes particular sense in 2018, as these traits serve as a direct contrast to how many Democrats perceive the president. I also expect that campaigns are still seeking to prove that a female candidate is qualified. Thus, I expect that campaigns running female candidates present their candidate in professional attire more often than not and deemphasize the role of family and motherhood in their candidate's life. Based on Dittmar's specific findings about consultants' recommendations for dress, I expect to find that Democratic women are especially likely to wear professional dress when compared with their male and Republican female counterparts. Also with Dittmar's research in mind, I expect that male candidates will be more likely than female candidates to be portrayed by their campaigns as a parent or a spouse. Additionally, I expect that campaigns are still attempting to mitigate gender stereotypes about women being weak and overly sympathetic, particularly on pressing 2018 political topics, such as immigration. I expect that when Democratic women discuss immigration, they acknowledge the humanitarian crisis at the border but also talk about the need to secure our borders and/or deport immigrants who are convicted criminals. Along the same lines, I expect that Republican women discuss support for "the wall" and Trump's immigration plan more frequently than their Republican male counterparts. I expect that candidates of all genders and political backgrounds will be portrayed as tough by their campaigns—because consultants from Dittmar's study said that men benefit from the association that they are tough and women bear the burden of proving they are tough. On the other hand, I

expect that women capitalized on their perceived strengths in issues like healthcare, focusing on that issue more than male candidates. I imagine this will be particularly true for Democratic women, as Democrats have made healthcare a top issue in the last decade.

Based on the existing literature per Dittmar, I expect to find that women candidates will attack male opponents more frequently than male candidates will attack female opponents. I assume that consultants advising male candidates are not reading academic literature that show that women are more negatively affected by attacks from opponents. Instead, I believe that consultants will rely on their discomfort with a male candidate attacking a female candidate, as outlined in Dittmar's research. Based on the findings of Starber et al. and Turken, I predict that the majority of advertisements featuring a voiceover who is not the candidate will use a male voiceover. However, I expect there to be a notable exception for attack advertisements, where a majority will feature a female voiceover—especially when it comes to men with female opponents who want to avoid being seen as a bully.

From Cassese's analysis, I believe that it is significant if an advertisement or piece of campaign content features a majority of women or a majority of men. The composition of who is in content is related to who that content is targeting. I expect that Republican candidates will be especially unlikely to have content featuring a majority of women, as the Republican consultants in Dittmar's study ranked appealing to women as less of a priority than Democratic consultants did—and consultants across the board agreed that appealing to women was most important for Democratic female candidates. For this reason, I also think that Democratic women will do the best job of representing—or possibly even over representing—women in their campaign content.

As was described earlier, politics is a traditionally male world and the traits associated with people who are best suited to hold office are in line with stereotypical notions of

masculinity. Because of the color pink's deeply ingrained association with femininity (just by a matter of wearing it, an infant is assumed to be a girl) outlined in Koller's study, it is a statement for a candidate of either gender to prominently sport pink. Because the color pink is tied with femininity and wearing it is still somewhat taboo for political leaders, a candidate's decision to wear pink is notable. I predict that female candidates who are running on change will be more likely to wear pink whereas incumbent women and men will be less likely to wear pink.

METHODS

To study if the content campaigns produce varies based on candidate gender, I used the campaigns of women who ran for congressional positions in North Carolina in the 2018 cycle—and the campaigns of the opponents who ran against them— as case studies. To study how female candidates may be portrayed differently than male candidates, I performed a qualitative content analysis and a quantitative content analysis of the social media pages and video advertisements from 2018 North Carolina Congressional campaigns. I analyzed the content from the campaigns of women candidates and their opponents in the two most competitive races featuring a female candidate in North Carolina, as well as the one race that featured two women who ran against each other. The races were: Democrat Linda Coleman, who ran against Republican incumbent George Holding from District 2; Republican incumbent Virginia Foxx and Democratic nominee D.D. Adams from District 5; and Democratic candidate Kathy Manning, who ran against Republican incumbent Ted Budd in District 13. It is notable that both the second district and the thirteenth district featured a relatively competitive race where a Democratic woman challenged a Republican man, and all races featured a Democratic female challenger who lost to a Republican incumbent. Overall, 197 pieces of content from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube were analyzed.

The races

In North Carolina's second congressional district, Linda Coleman (D) lost to one-term incumbent George Holding (R). Before entering public service, Coleman was a teacher (Linda Coleman Website "About" Page, 2018). Prior to running for office, she was the Human Resources Director for North Carolina's Department of Administration, Department of Agriculture and the NC Community College System (Linda Coleman Website "About" Page,

2018). As both a former Wake County Commissioner and state legislator, Coleman has experience representing Wake County (Murphy, 2018). However, Coleman also has experience with losing. She ran unsuccessfully for North Carolina lieutenant governor twice (Murphy, 2018).

George Holding is a former U.S. attorney and one-term representative. In 2016, Holding ousted the Republican incumbent by challenging her in the Republican primary (Murphy, 2018). In Congress, Holding has served on the House Ways and Means Committee, where he helped write the Republican tax bill that passed in late 2017 (Murphy, 2018). The tax bill, along with his votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act, were two of Coleman's major talking points during the campaign (Murphy, 2018). However, Holding focused on immigration and criticizing Coleman for her immigration policies (Murphy, 2018). The Congressional Leadership Fund, a conservative PAC, portrayed Coleman as fiscally irresponsible, saying she would both raise taxes and increase spending (Murphy, 2018). When the two debated in October 2018, Holding defended his 61 votes to repeal The Affordable Care Act, adding that he supports coverage for preexisting conditions (Murphy, 2018). Holding attempted to distance himself from the Republican president by saying he disagreed with steel tariffs and Trump's decision to end the nuclear arms treaty with Russia (Murphy, 2018). Holding criticized Coleman's support for sanctuary cities; in turn, she accused him of "fear-mongering" (Murphy, 2018). They also disagreed on taxes. Coleman criticized Holding for being out of touch with voters and failing to hold town halls (Murphy, 2018).

The second district, which consists of eastern and southern Wake County—as well as several more rural counties in central and eastern North Carolina—was considered a swing district as early as September 2018 (Murphy, 2018). And, like Democrats often do, Coleman

went into Election Day with an advantage: She won 57 percent of early and absentee votes (Murphy, 2018). After all results were in, Holding received 51.4 percent of the vote, while Coleman got 45.7 percent of the vote. Because of the district's competitiveness, groups spent a total of \$3.8 million on the race (Murphy, 2018).

In District 5—which encompasses mostly-urban Forsyth County, as well as 10 more counties left of Forsyth in the northwest part of the state—incumbent Virginia Foxx (R) beat Denise “D.D.” Adams (D). Foxx won with 57.2 percent of the vote, compared to Adams’ 42.8 percent (The Washington Post, 2018). Foxx, who worked as a professor and then an education administrator before entering politics, was first elected to Congress in 2004 (Ham, 2018). She was rated the most conservative congressional representative in North Carolina by the National Journal (Ham, 2018). She is the chair of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce (Hennessey, 2018). D.D. Adams, on the other hand, is a progressive Winston-Salem native who sits on the city council (Ham, 2018).

Before the general election, Adams defeated Jenny Marshall, a teacher who is also from Winston-Salem, in the Democratic primary. In a town hall between the two candidates in March 2018, voters asked the candidates about their positions on different issues. Both supported progressive economic views, such as a switch to a single-payer healthcare system and more affordable higher education (Tribune, 2018). Adams advocated for tuition-free two-year college and more affordable four-year college, as well as a cap on student loan debt (Tribune, 2018). On some issues, such as the minimum wage, Marshall seemed to be to the left of Adams, supporting a \$15 minimum wage to Adams’ proposed \$10 minimum wage (Tribune, 2018). The candidates agreed on gun control. Adams, a gun owner herself, said that she believes in closing loopholes, banning automatic weapons, bump stocks and magazines and requiring that gun owners obtain a

license or registration (Tribune, 2018). In May, Adams beat Marshall with 54.4 percent of the vote (Barber & Green, 2018). While Adams beat Marshall in Forsyth County, where Winston-Salem is, Marshall won more voters in the 10 other primarily rural counties in the district. Adams credited her victory to black women turning out in high numbers (Barber & Green, 2018).

With the exception of Watauga County (home of college town Boone) and Forsyth County (where urban Winston-Salem is), every other county in the district voted for Trump by more than 70 percent in 2016 (O'Donnell, 2018). Although the district has a similar percentage of Democratic and Republican voters, the 22 percent of voters who are unaffiliated seem to lean Republican (O'Donnell, 2018). In her debate against Foxx in October 2018, Adams confronted Foxx's opposition to sending aid to victims of Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Matthew (Luck, 2018). The candidates also disagreed on climate change, with Foxx in part blaming the 24-hour news cycle for "extreme weather events" seeming worse recently (Luck, 2018).

District 13—which comprises Mooresville, Statesville, Lexington, parts of High Point and most of Greensboro—has a conservative leaning. Incumbent Ted Budd (R) won the district by more than 12 percentage points and President Trump won the area by 9.2 percentage points in 2016 (Sonmez, 2018). Two years later, Budd won with 52 percent of the vote (Portillo, 2018). Challenger Kathy Manning (D) obtained 45 percent of the vote (Portillo, 2018). Considered to be one of the three most competitive congressional elections in the state, this race attracted money from outside groups (Portillo, 2018). Of the \$5.6 million donated from outside groups, \$2.1 million went to Budd and \$3.6 million went to Manning (Portillo, 2018).

Despite out-raising the incumbent—a feat in itself—Manning, a Greensboro-based lawyer and community organizer, came up short on Election Day (Portillo, 2018). Some of her

campaign's central issues were affordable healthcare, protection for "Dreamers" and requiring background checks for gun purchases (Portillo, 2018). The latter policy stance shows a direct contrast to Budd, who runs a gun store in Davie County. However, Budd is conservative on practically every measure as well based on his voting history (Portillo, 2018). Manning ran television ads stating that, if elected, she would not support Nancy Pelosi for Speaker of the House if Democrats took control of the House (Sonmez, 2018). In the ad, Manning also said she would "not take a dime of corporate PAC money" (Sonmez, 2018). Later, Budd criticized Manning for ties to Pelosi (Portillo, 2018).

Content Analysis

I performed both a qualitative content analysis and a quantitative content analysis of each campaign's Twitter, Facebook and Instagram account, as well analyzed up to five minutes of video content from each campaign. Only content from the 2018 election cycle was reviewed.

I analyzed 9 Instagram posts and the Instagram bio for each campaign that had an Instagram. I analyzed 9 tweets and the Twitter bio of each campaign that had a Twitter. I analyzed the Facebook About section and 9 Facebook posts for each campaign that had a Facebook. I analyzed up to 5 minutes of YouTube content from the 2018 cycle starting with the most recent content published on the campaign's YouTube page; however, other professional video content was analyzed on other media platforms if the YouTube page did not have at least 5 minutes of professional content. Only content that appeared to be professional enough to appear as a television advertisement was considered in the video section.

There was a total of 197 pieces of content studied. With the exception of George Holding, whose campaign either did not have an Instagram account or has since deleted the

account, every campaign had an accessible account on each medium that was used for 2018 campaign content. 54 Tweets, 6 Twitter bios, 54 Facebook posts, 6 Facebook About sections, 45 Instagram posts, 5 Instagram bios and 27 videos—or approximately 15 minutes of professional video content—was reviewed. Four videos, and about two minutes of content, was reviewed from Budd’s campaign. Ten videos and approximately five minutes of video content were reviewed from Manning’s campaign. One 2 minute and 45 second advertisement from Adams’ campaign was analyzed. Two video advertisements, amounting to one minute, were reviewed from Virginia Foxx’s campaign. Three advertisements, and about a minute and a half of content, were reviewed from Coleman’s campaign. Seven videos totaling almost three minutes of content were reviewed from Holding’s campaign.

I looked at each campaign’s official YouTube channel to examine the professional video content they created and analyzed up to five minutes of content. If the amount of applicable content on the campaign YouTube channel was less than five minutes, I searched the campaign’s other social media page to find more professional video content. If there was more than 5 minutes of content, I analyzed all of the most recent content. For non-professional video content, I counted back starting with the most recent post made prior to the announcement of the election’s outcome. For Twitter and Facebook, I analyzed every seventh post. For Instagram, I analyzed every third post (unless there were fewer than 30 posts, in which case I analyzed every second post).

From a quantitative perspective, I noted if a candidate is portrayed as a parent or spouse in the content. Being portrayed as a parent or a spouse includes photographs/videos of the candidate’s children or spouse in campaign-created content, as well as the candidate mentioning their spouse or children and/or their status as a spouse or parent (e.g. referring to themselves as a

mom). I quantitatively analyzed the clothing the candidates wore. Analyzing clothing is challenging when comparing male and female candidates because it is hard to determine how casual women are dressed compared to men or vice versa. Thus, I noted if the candidate was wearing clothing appropriate to wear on the floor of the House of Representatives, per the House of Representatives' dress code. To appear on the floor of the House of Representatives, a member must be wearing a suit jacket and tie if they are a man and women must be wearing clothing that is equivalently formal (including no closed toed shoes and no sleeveless blouses or dresses). I coded if the candidate is wearing pink for the color's association with femininity and change.

I counted the percentage of people in campaign content who are masculine-presenting versus feminine-presenting because gender composition in advertisements speaks to whom the content is targeting. The categories were broken up as follows: more than 60 percent of people in the content are women; between 40-60 percent of people in the content are women; more than 60 percent of the people in the content are men; the content only pictures the candidate; the content does not picture anyone.

I quantitatively analyzed how frequently candidates address two hot-button issues: healthcare and immigration, and the stances that they take on these issues. While immigration was considered an issue that female candidates were more likely to be associated with in Dittmar's research, it is unclear if the opposite would be true in today's climate. President Donald Trump has associated immigration with national security and crime—two issues male candidates were seen as having more expertise in from Dittmar's research. Thus, immigration is coded as a feminine-associated issue when presented as a humanitarian crisis and coded as a masculine-associated issue when portrayed as a national security issue.

From a qualitative perspective, I analyzed if the candidate was portrayed as uncorrupt (such as distancing themselves from dark money, special interests etc.), looking out for the voter, an agent of change, empathetic or tough. I also analyzed if the content portrayed the opponent as radical, dishonest or corrupt. Radical is considered portrayals of the opponent as possessing beliefs or exhibiting behavior that is well outside mainstream political thought. I noted if the content was focused on policy, getting people out to vote or raising money. I noted if the candidate was portrayed as an outsider and if Washington was portrayed as corrupt. I noted if Nancy Pelosi was portrayed negatively or if Donald Trump was portrayed positively. I noted if the content was an attack against the opponent or overtly patriotic.

Table 1

Media platform and how much I analyzed per candidate

Media Platform	Number per candidate
Video	Up to 5 minutes
Twitter	9 Tweets; bio section
Facebook	9 Posts; about section
Instagram	9 Posts; bio section

RESULTS

Gender Composition

Table 2

Gender Composition by Campaign

	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
60%+ women	50%	26%	37%	17%	33%	11%	18.5%	34.25%	18%	40%
40-60% women	28%	22%	37%	24%	42%	33%	27.5%	32.75%	26.33%	35.67%
60%+ men	16%	41%	10%	38%	12.5%	56%	48.5%	19.13%	45%	12.83%
Candidate	6%	11%	16%	21%	12.5%	0%	5.5%	13.88%	10.66%	11.5%

Percentage of content with at least 60% of people pictured appear female, percentage of content with 40%-60% of people pictured appear female, percentage of content where at least 60% of people pictured appear male and percentage of content picturing the candidate and no one else. Content that did not feature people was not considered.

Democrats were significantly more likely to publish content in which a majority of people pictured were women whereas Republicans were significantly more likely to publish content featuring a majority of men. Half of Kathy Manning's, 37 percent of DD Adams' and 33 percent of Linda Coleman's content had a clear majority of women (defined as at least 60 percent of people pictured appearing to be women). On the other hand, 41 percent of Ted Budd's, 38 percent of Virginia Foxx's and 41 percent of George Holding's content had a clear majority of men. This seems to be split on partisan—and not gender—lines.

Portrayals of Candidate

Table 3

Portrayals of candidate/themes by campaign

	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
Tough	9	3	6	9	1	7	5	6.25	5.3	5.3
Uncorrupt	13	1	4	1	5	5	3	5.75	2.33	7.33
Empathetic	7	2	4	2	9	0	1	5.5	1.33	6.67
Look out constituents	14	4	9	4	12	14	9	9.75	7.33	11.66
Washington Corrupt	11	5	0	1	0	3	4	3	3	3.67
Outsider	8	1	0	0	0	0	.5	2	.33	2.67
Criticize Pelosi	1	2	0	3	0	0	1	1	1.67	.33
Trump good	0	4	0	4	0	8	6	1	5.33	0
Patriotic	7	6	0	3	0	7	6.5	2.5	5.33	2.33
Change	21	4	12	1	8	6	5	10.5	3.67	13.67

The averages for males, females, Republicans and Democrats are relatively similar on portrayals as tough. An example of a candidate being presented as tough is Virginia Foxx's campaign emphasizing how Foxx "stepped up" and stood up for veterans in her video advertisement about veterans. Candidates portrayed as fighters are being presented as tough.

Corruption relates to acting dishonestly for personal gain. According to Dittmar's findings, female candidates may capitalize on the fact that their gender is not traditionally associated with politics to distance themselves from Washington's perceived corruption. By the same token, she found that female candidates may benefit from the perception that men represent the status quo of political corruption. Democratic candidates score significantly higher on portrayals of being uncorrupt. An example of being uncorrupt is Kathy Manning pledging not to take corporate PAC money in various social media posts and a video advertisement. It appears as

if female Democrats may be playing to this stereotype of women; however, it is important to note that all of these candidates are challengers and it is more difficult for incumbents who already have ties in Washington to be presented as uncorrupt.

It appears as if women candidates (again, Democrats in particular) are indeed playing off the association that they are empathetic. Linda Coleman promoting her Linda Listens series, in which she listened to constituents talk about the issues that matter most to them, is considered a portrayal as empathetic.

When Kathy Manning says she is “willing to work for anyone to do what’s best for North Carolina, but I’ll only answer to you” in video ad “Shouting,” she is emphasizing the fact that she is looking out for constituents. While these averages are high across the board, Democratic women may have used their non-incumbent status or their association with femininity to contrast themselves with Republicans who their campaigns portray as corrupt. For example, Linda Coleman’s advertisement “For Us” provides a clear distinction between Linda Coleman, who will fight for affordable healthcare and has the best interests of North Carolinians in mind and George Holding, who is unethical.

Portrayals of Washington as corrupt were very similar for each group average. An example is Kathy Manning’s “Shouting,” which begins with the statement: “If you behaved like Congress, you’d lose your job. But they keep fighting, and nothing seems to change.”

Manning and Budd were the only two candidates to present themselves as outsiders. Manning did so much more than Budd. In video ad “Blessings,” she says, “I’m Kathy Manning. I approve this message and I’m running for Congress because I’m tired of politicians from both parties letting big drug companies write the rules while families pay the price.”

There was only one instance of a Democrat criticizing or distancing themselves from Nancy Pelosi. In “Shouting,” Kathy Manning says, “I’ll vote against Nancy Pelosi for Speaker.” And in attack ad against Kathy Manning from Ted Budd that aired after Manning’s ad pledging to not support Pelosi, a grandma in a group of older women playing cards says, “Kathy Manning gave big money to Hillary and Pelosi,” to which another older woman says, “Now that her pal Pelosi says it’s OK, she’s running away from her.”

The positive portrayal of Trump and policies that are largely associated with Trump—such as the tax bill from 2017—were coded the same. Unsurprisingly, only Republican candidates praised or aligned themselves with President Trump. Ted Budd advertised a rally he attended with Trump on social media and publicized that he was endorsed by the president, while Virginia Foxx and George Holding aligned themselves with Trump on policies like immigration and the economy.

Portrayals of overt patriotism were most often seen from Republicans. Prominent displays of the American flag in George Holding’s video ads or Kathy Manning’s pledge to “put country over party” are examples of this.

Change as a theme could be anything from a candidate explicitly stating that a change in leadership is needed or a recommendation for a change in policy. Because of the former, Democratic candidates were already positioned to have higher numbers in this category. Democratic challengers presented themselves as a change to both their Republican incumbent opponents and the status quo in a Washington where Republicans reigned. Even considering these factors, the results are telling: Democratic women used change as a theme in their content an average of more than 13 times while the lone female Republican in the sample was the least likely to use change as a theme in her content, doing so only once. Given that Virginia Foxx is

the most conservative representative from North Carolina and Donald Trump's policies are generally in line with what she believes, this makes sense. Opponent DD Adams used change as a theme 12 times. Change was seen as a theme most for Kathy Manning, at 21 times. Her incumbent opponent Ted Budd used change as a theme four times. Interestingly, incumbent Republican George Holding and challenger Linda Coleman used change as a theme at relatively equal amounts at 6 and 8 times respectively. Much of Holding's reforms surrounded smaller government policies (such as a work requirement for welfare) that ultimately would not be much of a change in direction for the Republican Party. Kathy Manning and DD Adams were the only candidates who talked about their willingness to cross party lines, at eight times and once respectively.

Portrayals of Family

Table 4

Number of portrayals as parent/spouse by campaign

	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
Parent	7	7	0	1	1	1	4	2.25	3	2.67
Spouse	6	3	0	1	0	1	2	1.75	1.67	2

Candidates tended to mirror their opponent in terms of their likelihood of mentioning or picturing themselves with their children. In the Budd vs. Manning campaign, both candidates showed themselves with or mentioned their children seven times. For example, both Kathy Manning's and Ted Budd's bio sections on social media platforms noted their status as a parent.

In the Foxx vs. Adams race, Foxx portrayed herself as a mom once and Adams never did (although she does not have children). Both George Holding and Linda Coleman portrayed themselves as parents once—in their respective Facebook bio sections. Similarly, candidates seemed to more or less mirror opponents in frequencies of portrayals as a spouse. Budd portrayed himself as a husband thrice whereas Manning portrayed herself as a wife six times; Foxx portrayed herself as a spouse once, and Adams did so none (she is also unmarried); Coleman never mentioned her spouse and Holding did once. In one video advertisement from Ted Budd’s campaign about how he is “just getting started,” he is pictured eating dinner with his wife and children. In the same video, he is seen fishing with his son.

Narrators in Video Advertisements

Table 5

Gender(s) of narrators in video ads by campaign

	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
None	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Non- Candidate Female	1	1	0	0	1	4	2.5	.5	1.67	.67
Non- Candidate Male	1	0	0	2	1	6	3	1	2.67	.67

Male and female	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.25	0	.33
Candidate	6	1	1	0	1	0	.5	2	.33	2.67
Candidate and female	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.25	0	.33
Total	10	4	1	2	3	10	7	4	5.33	4.67

As predicted, non-candidates males (10) were more likely to be narrators than non-candidate females (7). Video advertisements that were professionally made were considered in this section. For example, Virginia Foxx's advertisement on the economy with professional cinematography that a consultancy was hired to shoot would be considered in this section whereas a video taken on a cell phone posted to Instagram in which Kathy Manning's daughter discusses why voters should support her mom would not. Most campaign videos were found on candidate YouTube accounts; however, some were found on campaign Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts. Narrators is more inclusive than voiceovers. Candidates, as well as narrators that speak directly to the camera were considered along with unseen traditionally voiceovers that were not the candidate.

Portrayals of Opponent

Table 6

Opponent portrayals by campaign

	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
Radical	0	1	0	0	0	2	1.5	0	1	0
Dishonest	5	4	1	0	0	1	2.5	1.5	1.67	2
Corrupt	4	4	1	0	3	1	2.5	2	1.67	2.67

The results are skewed low for women because two of the female candidates ran against each other in an uncompetitive race. In the competitive races, men are more likely to be attacked for being corrupt (7 times) than female candidates were from their male opponents (5 times). In these races, men and women were also attacked equally for being dishonest (5 times). An example of a characterization as dishonest is George Holding's campaign claiming that Linda Coleman's attack advertisement against him is false—and she knows it.

The only times in which an opponent was portrayed as radical were attacks from Republican men against Democratic women. Perhaps this means that attacking an opponent for being radically conservative is perceived by Democratic campaigns as less effective than attacking an opponent for being radically liberal is perceived by Republican campaigns. Maybe the aforementioned is true in these districts in particular, which lean right. It could also mean that campaigns think it is advantageous to draw on stereotypes about women as liberals, suggesting that women—who are historically and currently underrepresented in politics—will enact far left

reforms if elected. Linda Coleman was portrayed as radical twice, and Kathy Manning was portrayed as radical once. In George Holding's "Circus" video advertisement, Linda Coleman is portrayed as protesting while Holding is working in his office.

In "Circus" as it is labeled on YouTube or "Marching in protest vs. creating jobs. The choice is clear." on Facebook, video footage of Linda Coleman at the 2018 Women's March in Raleigh is shown. In the video, protesters are holding signs like "Feminists for all Women. Vegans for all species."

In the ad, the female narrator sitting at a table says, "It's a circus and Linda Coleman was right there marching with the protesters. Linda Coleman is for sanctuary cities that protect criminals." Then, a video of Linda Coleman saying "I support sanctuary cities" at a Wake Democrats Forum appears on the screen. The narrator continues, saying, "And Linda Coleman wants to raise taxes, and that will kill jobs. While Linda Coleman is marching in protest, George Holding is calmly doing his work to create jobs. The choice is clear."

Candidates seemed to mirror their opponent in characterizing them as dishonest; there does not seem to be a gender attachment to this, possibly contradicting the research of Dittmar. Republican incumbents were slightly more likely to be portrayed as corrupt; portrayals of corruption were most common in video advertisements.

Narrators of Attacks

Table 7

Gender of Attack Ad Narrators by Campaign

	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
None	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	.33	0
Female	1	0	0	0	1	4	2	.5	1.33	.67
Male	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	.5	0	.67
Mixed	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.25	0	.33
Candidate	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	.5	0	.67
Total	4	2	0	0	3	4	3	1.75	2	2.33

Non-candidate women outnumber non-candidate men as narrators in attack ads 7 to 2 (9 to 2 if counting female candidates as narrators). The Holding campaign's use of narrators exemplify the findings of Starber et al. and Turken. All of the advertisements that focus on Holding's candidacy feature an unseen male voiceover, as do his campaign's "American Stories" advertisements that give brief biographies on figures from American history. However, his attack advertisements against Linda Coleman all feature the same narrator: an older, put together Caucasian woman with a Southern accent.

Number of Total Attacks by Campaign

Table 8

Quantity of attacks on opponent by campaign

Attacks on Opponent	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F Avg	R avg	D avg
	6	3	1	0	3	3	3	2.5	2	3.33

In terms of the number of attacks, Ted Budd was attacked six times, Kathy Manning was attacked three times, DD Adams was not attacked at all, Virginia Foxx was attacked once, Linda Coleman was attacked three times and George Holding was attacked three times. Only video advertisements that primarily focused on attacking the opponent were considered “attack ads”; however, any critique of the opponent was considered an attack. But a simple mention of a policy difference was not coded as an attack. For example, “Term Limits” from the Holding campaign, which briefly mentions that Linda Coleman does not support term limits, is not considered an attack. The four female candidates were criticized seven times by their opponents; the two male opponents were criticized nine times. Interestingly, the female-female race with Foxx and Adams featured the least amount of attacks; however, it was also the least competitive of the races studied.

Policy

Table 9

Number of Policy-Focused vs. Voting Mobilization-Focused Content

Focus	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
Policy	10	5	6	4	5	14	9.5	6.25	7.66	7
Out to Vote	23	2	12	8	12	1	1.5	13.75	3.66	15.66

Overall, more content made explicit appeals to encouraging people to vote (58) than discussed policy (44). This may have been skewed because posts from Election Day were included and the weeks that come before Election Day—in which early voting is occurring and candidates are mobilizing voters—were disproportionately represented in the study. Democrats were much more likely than Republicans to directly ask people to vote. This can be explained by the fact that all of the Republican candidates were incumbents and Democrats typically benefit from high voter turnout.

Hot-Button Issues

Table 10

Quantities of mentions of immigration and healthcare by campaign

Issue	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
Healthcare	7	0	3	1	6	1	1	4.25	.67	5.33
Immigration	0	0	0	0	0	1	.5	0	.33	0

Candidates mentioned healthcare a total of 17 times and immigration just once in the content that was reviewed. Positioning on healthcare was extremely partisan: all Democratic candidates positioned themselves as for the Affordable Care Act/progressive healthcare policy or against Republican policy. Both Kathy Manning's campaign and Linda Coleman's campaign used a personal story from a constituent who would have been hurt if protections for people with preexisting conditions were ended to attack the incumbent representative for voting to eliminate protections for preexisting conditions. There was exactly one mention of healthcare from Foxx and Holding and no mentions from Budd's campaign. Virginia Foxx's mention relates to where she boasts about the need to repeal the Affordable Care Act in her Facebook bio section. The single mention of healthcare from George Holding's campaign was inconclusive about if the candidate supports liberal or conservative healthcare policies. In a response to an attack ad from the Coleman campaign, Holding's campaign says it is a lie that Holding voted to end protections for preexisting conditions and indicates that Holding voted for the American Health Care Act or "Trumpcare." This bill would have partially repealed Obamacare; however, Holding's campaign is also aiming to present him as more moderate by showing that he supports protections for people with preexisting conditions.

Although there was only one mention of immigration in the content reviewed, it was quite memorable. The Holding campaign's immigration-focused video ad "Sanctuary Cities" bears striking similarities to the infamous Willie Horton advertisement from the 1988 presidential election (Criss, 2018). In the Willie Horton ad, a male narrator says, "Bush and Dukakis on crime. Bush supports the death penalty for first-degree murderers. Dukakis not only opposes the death penalty; he allowed first-degree murderers to have weekend passes from prison. One was Willie Horton who murdered a boy in a robbery, stabbing him 19 times. Despite

a life sentence, Horton received 10 weekend passes from prison. Horton fled, kidnapped a young couple, stabbing the man and repeatedly raping his girlfriend. Weekend prison passes. Dukakis on crime.” During the part of the advertisement that discusses Horton, Horton’s mugshot and a picture of him being handcuffed are on the screen. Even in 1988, the Willie Horton advertisement—which was created by supporters of George HW Bush to criticize opponent Michael Dukakis—was controversial and drew criticisms for its explicit appeals to racism and perpetuation of stereotypes about black men (Criss, 2018).

In the Holding campaign’s “Sanctuary Cities,” the woman who narrates all of Holding’s attack advertisements says, “An illegal immigrant got a DWI in Durham,” as mugshots of the offender, a Latino man, appear on the screen. As the narrator says, “then assaulted a child in Carrboro,” a document comes up on the screen and the words “sexual battery” are zoomed in on. As the screen returns to the narrator, she says “ICE told local police to hold him, to deport him, but Orange County refused and released him, like a sanctuary city. Linda Coleman supports sanctuary cities. George Holding opposes sanctuary cities that protect criminals. The choice is clear.” The ad’s explicit fear-mongering and appeals to xenophobia stand out among the rest of the content that was reviewed. Like the Willie Horton ad, the advertisement features someone who Republicans argue was able to commit a crime because of Democrats’ weak policies, features a mugshot of the perpetrator and plays off negative racial stereotypes that a group of people are criminals. Again, it’s particularly notable that Holding’s candidate, Linda Coleman, is a woman. Holding’s campaign may also be benefitting from the perception that women—and especially Democratic women—are weak on immigration. Holding’s campaign portrays Holding as tough on immigration, in line with masculine stereotypes.

Dress

Table 11

Breakdown of Dress Formality in Campaign Content by Candidate

	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
Business Professional	20%	41%	55%	61%	63%	15%	28%	49.75%	39%	46%
Casual	53%	59%	33%	24%	25%	85%	72%	33.75%	56	37%
Inconclusive	27%	0%	13%	15%	13%	0%	0%	17%	5%	17.67%

Percentage of content in which the candidate is portrayed as wearing business professional—defined as clothes appropriate to wear on the floor of the House of Representatives—or clothes that are not up to this standard or clothes that are inconclusive. Content in which the candidate was not pictured was not considered.

Initially, the results seem to suggest that Dittmar’s finding that consultants are more likely to suggest that female candidates dress in business professional is true. However, it’s important to note that Holding’s results were skewed by a picture of him in business casual clothing that was at the end of all of his video advertisements; because Holding did not have an Instagram, there were fewer pictures of him in general to review. Also, Kathy Manning is a notable outlier among women candidates.

The results are further confounded by the fact that it is much easier to tell if a man is in clothing appropriate to wear on the House floor than a woman. Many of the shots that were deemed inconclusive showed female candidates from the waist up; on a male candidate, it is easy to tell if a man is wearing a suit and tie (the appropriate outfit for the House of Representatives for men) from the waist up. While it is certainly possible that a male candidate could be wearing a dress shirt, tie and suit jacket with a pair of jeans, this is unlikely. Thus, these shots were deemed as business professional. If a female candidate is wearing a nice blouse that covers her

shoulders, her bottoms are what determines if she is wearing business professional attire or not. When it's unknown if she is wearing slacks or a pair of jeans—and very probable that she could be wearing either—these units were coded as inconclusive.

Even with the large inconclusive section, a majority of the women dressed in business professional most of the time in content—and the overall average percent of the time female candidates appeared in business professional (49.75%) number would only go up if the inconclusive data could be known.

Wearing pink

Table 12

Quantity of times wearing pink prominently by candidate

	Manning	Budd	Adams	Foxx	Coleman	Holding	M avg	F avg	R avg	D avg
Pink	2	0	5	0	4	0	0	2.75	0	3.67

All of the female candidates except for Virginia Foxx prominently wore pink in at least two content pieces. None of the male candidates wore pink in any content. While this split is entirely on partisan lines, it's important to note that this might not actually be the case outside of this sample as all but one of the Republicans was a man and all of the Democratic candidates were women. In one of Kathy Manning's video advertisements, "Lilly," a young woman who graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill while living with an incurable tumor is focused on. It is noted that Ted Budd voted to rid of protections for people with preexisting conditions in the advertisement. At the end of the advertisement, Kathy Manning is wearing a hot pink shirt as she

speaks to the camera, saying “In Congress, I’ll protect people like Lilly—not big insurance and drug companies—and work for healthcare we can all afford.” Manning is wearing the same shirt in B roll of her talking to Lilly in what looks like a backyard patio in the clip. In this ad, Manning is aligning herself with femininity, contrasting herself from a moral and policy perspective with opponent Ted Budd—and possibly playing off the stereotype that women are better suited to handle healthcare and more are ethical generally. While the color pink aligns Manning with femininity, the boldness of the hot pink may have been chosen to imply bravery and a change in leadership (similar to how Nancy Pelosi’s decision to wear hot pink to her swearing-in ceremony was characterized). Also notably, DD Adams’ stock photo—used as her profile pictures on her Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter accounts— shows her wearing a hot pink, button-down formal jacket.

DISCUSSION

Many of my hypotheses were, at least on the surface, proven true by the results. However, I want to start by noting an obvious limitation: the sample itself. The races have no Democratic incumbents, no Democratic men, no Republican challengers and ultimately, no Democratic winners. Thus, they are quite limited and it is sometimes unclear if a trend is likely related to party or incumbency status because they are one in the same for all races in this study. All of the races take place in North Carolina. On top of that, the sample size is only three races and six campaigns.

Gender Composition

First, the hypothesis that Democratic female candidates would be more likely to have a majority of women in their content is supported by the results. On average, 40 percent of a female Democratic campaign's content featured a clear majority of women, which was defined as content in which at least 60 percent of people pictured were women. For Republicans, this was just 18 percent. Intuitively, 45 percent of the average Republican candidate's content featuring people besides the candidate was made up of 60 percent men or more. For Democrats, content with an obvious male majority (content in which at least 60 percent of people pictured were men) made up an average of just 12.83 percent of content.

While there is abundant research on how candidates are portrayed in relation to their gender in campaign content, minimal research has focused on portrayals of non-candidates in relation to their gender. This theme came up throughout my research, as many of the campaigns seemed to uphold traditional gender roles for non-candidates. For example, Kathy Manning's campaign shows exclusively men as construction workers and one of Ted Budd's campaign

shows grandmothers chatting and playing cards. A Ted Budd ad features a grieving mother who lost her daughter to opioid addiction. Women are very frequently portrayed as volunteers in campaign content, particularly on Instagram. However, there were obviously times when campaign advertisements bucked gender stereotypes with the stories they told. Take Linda Coleman’s “Kevin” video ad, which is told from the story of a dad who would have died and left his son fatherless if he did not have health insurance. The advertisement primarily portrays Kevin in his domestic role as a parent. Research on how women and men are portrayed in political campaign content—and if this varies on party and candidate gender lines—would be interesting and show how campaigns are attempting to win voters. A focus on more traditional gender roles may be an attempt to win over more conservative constituents, whereas an ad in which the main parties do not follow traditional gender roles may appeal to more liberal voters.

The Holding campaign’s disparate and stereotypical portrayals are not limited to the “Sanctuary Cities” ad; they also extend to the way that men and women are portrayed in his campaign’s American Stories advertisements, which tell stories about why figures in American history emulate the best qualities of America. In the two advertisements from the last cycle, Thomas Edison and the Angel of Anzio are focused on. The ads begin with a black screen with the words “American Stories with George Holding” on it, followed by old pictures that correspond with the words in the voiceover. The voiceover is done by a male who is not George Holding. At the end of the advertisement, a picture of George Holding shaking hands with a man (presumably a farmer) standing beside a tractor is shown.

The Thomas Edison advertisement has the following narration: “He started a business, weathered a recession, his wife died, he struggled on, remarried and invented the electric light. And that same spirit, not government, built our country.”

The Angel of Anzio's narration is: "At Anzio, Mary Roberts calmly cared for wounded soldiers as her field hospital was bombed. She was the angel of Anzio, the first woman to win the Silver Star, and that spirit—not politics—will rebuild our country."

While both American Stories advertisements tell tales of patriotism and resilience, the depictions of the characters are quite different. Thomas Edison was an innovator who used his intelligence to create the lightbulb. While Mary Roberts was portrayed as brave, she is lauded for her work in a female-dominated profession as a nurse where she used traditionally female skills of being a caretaker. Additionally, she used obedience instead of her own innate brilliance to contribute.

Positive Associations with Women

The findings about Democratic female candidates capitalizing on their perceived strengths are confirmed—at least superficially. Democrats (of whom all were women in this study) talked about change much more than any other group. Gender aside, Democratic challengers running in 2018 had a reason to focus on change: they ran against Republican incumbents (in most cases at least) who are from the same party as a deeply unpopular president. Perhaps Democratic men talked about change at a similar level; and perhaps Republican challengers of both genders who unseated Democrats in 2010 also discussed change in similar amounts. However, Dittmar's findings suggest that women are in fact likely to capitalize on their gender and its association with change.

The same thinking can be applied to the fact that Democrats on average were portrayed as uncorrupt 7.33 times and Republicans were portrayed as uncorrupt just 2.33 times on average. Instances in which candidates were portrayed as not being influenced by special interests or

outside money were considered uncorrupt. Is it the gender or gender/party combination that makes candidates more likely to associate themselves with being unaffected by special interests and the corruption of Washington or is it their incumbency status? Is it both? Similarly, are women really more likely to portray themselves as political outsiders or are non-incumbents more likely to portray themselves as political outsiders?

While I am not able to confidently say my results confirm that women candidates are more likely to capitalize on their status as outsiders and ability to shake things up, I can confidently say that my results support the notion that challengers are more likely to capitalize on these traits.

However, I am more confident that my results support the idea that women candidates' campaigns are more likely to emphasize their empathy. Every female candidate's Instagram page featured a town hall that boasted about the importance of listening to constituents and their needs. Ted Budd was twice portrayed as listening to constituents or being empathetic—and both times were in reference to the opioid crisis, a very specific Republican policy issue. George Holding's empathy was not emphasized in any advertisement.

Toughness

In line with my expected findings, women and men are similarly likely to be portrayed as tough by their campaigns. While women candidates were just slightly more likely to be associated with toughness by their campaigns (an average of 6.25 times as opposed to men's average of 5 times), this is not particularly significant given how small the sample size is. Men's associations with toughness seemed to be more explicit, such as George Holding's campaign's

explicit use of the word ‘tough.’ Three of the four video advertisements that focus on Holding’s candidacy explicitly refer to him with the words ‘level-headed’ and ‘tough.’

Female candidates seemed to be portrayed as ‘fighters’—and often that word was used in content. Dittmar’s research showed that female candidates focus on stories of resilience—such as Carly Fiorina’s struggle with breast cancer. This was mirrored in the way that female candidates’ stories were told in my research. For example, DD Adams’ campaign video told her life story, detailing how she took on working class jobs for a decade because she graduated from college during a recession. Linda Coleman’s “For Us” campaign talks about how she grew up on a tobacco farm and then became a teacher who “fights for us.” One of Kathy Manning’s video ads, “Blessings,” tells the story of her daughter’s chronic illness and battling with insurance companies over bills every month. These personal stories show resilience. None of the Republican candidates had these stories about the challenges they have faced in their life. With these resilience tales, female candidates can simultaneously show they have the toughness necessary for political office without compromising on their femininity. As noted earlier, not adhering to traditionally feminine traits has been found to be even more damaging for female candidates than not possessing the masculine traits necessary for political office (Cassee & Holman, 2015). Non-incumbent candidates in particular may be especially motivated to tell personal stories showing resilience, so that the public can learn more about the candidate and hear why he or she would be a good representative. But because of the lack of representativeness and size of my study’s sample, it is unknown if the personal narratives are truly more common among Democratic women, incumbents, both or neither. However, my findings on stories of resilience support Dittmar’s findings about non-incumbent women who run for Congress.

Family

Confirming another hypothesis, male candidates were more likely than female candidates to be portrayed as parents by their campaigns. But with an average of 4 portrayals as a spouse for male candidates and 2 for female candidates, the difference was not large—especially considering the study sample size is 6 campaigns. The number of portrayals as a spouse was even more similar (with 2 times on average for men and 1.75 times on average for women). Based on my findings, there is no reason to believe that women are deemphasizing their roles as parents and spouses—at least not any more than male candidates are.

More predictive than gender or party was how frequently the candidate's opponent was portrayed as a parent or spouse. Interestingly, candidates who portrayed themselves as a spouse relatively frequently compared to the sample were also more likely to portray themselves as a parent whereas candidates who were portrayed as a spouse less often (either 0 or 1 times) were portrayed as parents with similar infrequency. While all candidates in the Foxx vs. Adams race and the Holding vs. Coleman race were portrayed as parents or spouses just 0 or 1 times, the Budd vs. Manning race had quite different results.

Negative Campaigning

Campaigns also seem to mirror their opponent's campaign in negativity. It's important to note that the high average for Democrats and female candidates may be inflated by the fact that challengers face an incumbent with an established record that can be critiqued, so attacking may be more advantageous for challengers. On a similar note, the more competitive races (Budd vs. Manning and Holding vs. Coleman) featured significantly more attacks than the less competitive race (Foxx vs. Adams).

These findings confirm the prediction that male candidates would be attacked by their female opponents more frequently than female candidates would be attacked by male opponents; however, it's important to note that incumbents were attacked more frequently (10) than challengers (6). Democrats—of which all were women—were attacked 6 times and Republicans were attacked 10 times. Although Democratic women are the most vulnerable to attacks according to literature, they were not the most likely to be attacked. In fact, the two Republican men were attacked a total of 9 times by their Democratic female opponents and the same Democratic women were attacked 6 times by their Republican male opponents.

Based on Dittmar's findings, I expected to find that men's corruption and dishonesty would be attacked more frequently than women's. This finding could not be proven. However, the fact that only women were characterized as radical by male opponents has interesting implications. Perhaps Republican male candidates running against women use the stereotype that women are liberal to their advantage.

Narration

The expectation that a larger percentage of narration overall would be from men but that a majority of attack ads would be narrated by women was confirmed. 10 advertisements featured just a non-candidate male narrator, while 7 featured just a non-candidate female narrator. The implications of looking at narration in advertisements are interesting because of who the advertisement is giving authority to. This confirms the findings of Harken and Starber et al.

Of the 10 advertisements that featured just a male narrator, just 2 of these were attack ads. But of the 7 advertisements featuring just a female narrator, 6 were attack ads (4 of which came from George Holding's campaign). Additionally, only female candidates narrated attack

advertisements. Male candidates routinely used women in attack advertisements so a man would not have to attack the female opponent. Even if the ads do not have narrators, Ted Budd's advertisements featuring older women playing cards and criticizing Kathy Manning serve the same purpose. Not having a narrator—male or female—appears like a thinly-veiled attempt to attack an opponent in a more light-hearted, less divisive way.

Hot-Button Issues

My prediction on healthcare was correct; Democratic women did emphasize healthcare in their campaigns. Democratic women accounted for 15 of the 17 pieces of campaign content that mentioned healthcare. All 15 of the mentions from Democratic women portrayed the candidate in favor of policies like the Affordable Care Act or opposed to Republican healthcare policies. While it is likely that healthcare was a focus for Democrats running across the nation in 2018, Democratic women may have a particular advantage in discussing healthcare, as their party and gender are both associated with compassion. Thus, the three Democratic women in this study may have used this association—along with the gendered expectation of healthcare expertise for women candidates—to their advantage.

Kathy Manning had two video advertisements devoted exclusively to healthcare, one featuring her personal testimonial and another featuring a testimonial from a constituent. Linda Coleman's campaign also created a video ad with a testimonial about the Affordable Care Act from a constituent. The only candidate to brag about not supporting the Affordable Care Act, however, was Virginia Foxx. And George Holding's single mention of the issue was a counterattack advertisement in response to the Coleman campaign's assertion that he had voted to not protect people with preexisting conditions. For the most part, Republicans shied away

from the issue of healthcare. This is relatively unsurprising given the failure to pass any Republican healthcare reform since Trump has taken office.

Republicans also seldom mentioned immigration—but this time, they were in the company of Democrats. Because immigration was mentioned so sparsely (only once—and never by a female candidate), it was not used as a way for female candidates to prove their toughness. Even the hyper-conservative Virginia Foxx stayed away from the issue. Ted Budd, who rallied alongside Donald Trump, did not mention immigration—at least not in the content studied in this research.

However, as has been noted before, the one mention of immigration was in perhaps the most memorable piece of content studied. On the surface, Holding's "Circus" video advertisement that shows opponent Linda Coleman at a protest might seem to be just contrasting a conservative, even-keeled approach to government with what liberals want: change. But beneath the surface, the ad actually features gender and racial coding. In contrast to Holding's level-headedness—a quality that he is referred to as possessing in three of the four video advertisements that focus exclusively on him—Coleman is excitable. The video reinforces gender stereotypes that men are calm and rational while women are reactive. And it's notable both that the protest in question is the Women's March. Coleman's status as a black woman is important here. In contrast to Holding who was "calmly doing his work," Coleman was at a protest, thus emphasizing the fact that Coleman was not working and was protesting instead. Both of these characterizations directly correspond with two stereotypes about black women: the welfare queen and the angry black woman (Harris-Perry, 2014). Intentionally or not, these advertisements perpetuate stereotypes about black women by juxtaposing a black woman who is at a protest instead of at work with a rational, calm white man in his office.

But the racial coding regarding work ethic isn't just seen in "Circus." In Holding's "Workfare" video ad, the male narrator says, "Washington politics is broken but George Holding has our values. He believes that able-bodied people on welfare should work for their benefits. Workfare, not welfare. That's Congressman George Holding." This clearly implies that there are people who can work that are receiving welfare benefits without working. Often, discussion of welfare reform and workfare in political ads is a form of racial cuing—especially when it relates to the idea that there are people on welfare who are undeserving (Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2004). As literature has shown, welfare (along with crime) is a racially coded issue for many Americans; by bringing up the concept of workfare, one is bringing up the idea that undeserving black people are abusing the system (Valentino et al., 2004). According to a 2004 study about racial coding, politicians use racial cuing over issues like welfare to subtly—rather than explicitly like in the Willie Horton advertisement—use racial antipathy to mobilize supporters (Valentino et al., 2004). Unlike explicit racism, implicit cuing of racial resentment is unlikely to draw negative criticism but it is still likely to be successful in getting the message across. The study found that racialized thinking can be activated without explicitly referring to race—or even showing images of undeserving people (Valentino et al., 2004). Furthermore, the study found that a cue that black people are undeserving activated negative feelings about redistributive policies such as welfare and affirmative action (Valentino et al., 2004). Considering that discussions of a work requirement for welfare are already racially coded, Holding's campaign is—intentionally or not—activating these cues in constituents. This is especially notable because in "Circus," Holding's black female opponent is portrayed as being at rallies protesting while he is "calmly doing his work."

While some research has looked into the extra burden women of color who run for office and hold office face when compared to their white female counterparts, research on women of color in politics is somewhat sparse when compared to the research that focuses primarily on either gender or race. A 2012 study found that white women and men of color in congressional office have made significant progress in the last several decades in terms of how they are portrayed in the news media; they now receive similar amounts of coverage as white men, including similar amounts of positive and negative coverage (Gershon, 2012). Unfortunately, women of color have not seen the same sort of progress. They still receive much less news media coverage than white men overall and more negative media coverage proportionally to the amount of coverage they receive, which the author argues could hinder how women of color perform at the polls in their district (Gershon, 2012). More research must focus specifically on women of color in politics—particularly as candidates.

Dress

While I expected that *Democratic* women would wear professional attire at higher rates in their content than any other group, I was surprised to find that the lone Republican woman also dressed very professionally. While these findings may suggest that women are in fact more likely to dress professionally in their campaign content on average, there were notable outliers with Holding and Manning. Again, the sample itself was quite small and not all the data for female candidates' wardrobes was conclusive. However, my results do generally support Dittmar's finding that female candidates are consulted to dress more formally than male candidates—likely to prove their credentials and be taken seriously.

My expectation that women would wear pink and men would not was confirmed for the most part. Further research should examine the role of pink in female candidate's wardrobes as a

color that signifies feminine power. Pink—and especially hot pink—was worn by all of the Democratic candidates at least twice in the content reviewed. It is unknown if Democratic men would be similarly likely to wear pink—to grab attention, showcase a reluctance to adhere to stereotypes about masculinity or even signify change.

LIMITATIONS

North Carolina's 2018 congressional elections were not reflective of how power exchanged hands across the country. Thus, these campaigns may not be totally reflective of the way that women in the United States ran in 2018. Because many of these candidates ran in places that have been gerrymandered to favor one party (the Republican Party in all cases) but were made competitive because of how unpopular the president is, most of these campaigns show how women ran in 2018 in competitive districts where the stakes were high and the odds were stacked against them. Because of gerrymandering, it is also hard to examine the effectiveness of the campaigns' strategic decisions and messaging. However, my study is primarily interested in the way that female candidates and gender were portrayed in media from the campaigns; not necessarily if their strategies are effective in winning said elections (although it's important to note that many of these races were far more successful than anticipated).

Methods Limitations

While my qualitative and quantitative content analyses produced data that showed differences in the way that male and female candidates were portrayed in the races studied, it is not clear why this was. This is because I was not able to conduct interviews with campaign staffers or candidates. For that reason, I cannot determine if the decisions made by campaigns were made with the candidate's gender in mind, much less why particular choices were made at all. For example, I do not know why George Holding's campaign consistently chose the same woman to narrate attack advertisements or whether the decision to wear pink had any significance in the mind of strategists or candidates. On the same note, it is unknown who made recommendations that ultimately led to such a decision. Strategic decisions could have been made by the candidate him or herself, the campaign manager, the communications director,

lower-level campaign staffers or outside consultants. Even more diverse is the people or groups that could have been responsible for a recommendation that led to a particular choice.

Suggestions could have come from campaign personnel (either upper-level or lower-level staffers), outside consultants, candidates, friends and family members, volunteers, a public official offering advice, a political action committee, or even a state or national party.

Furthermore, it is unclear if the differences in campaign content between male and female campaigns can be attributed to gender. As mentioned above, there are a multitude of factors that come into play when deciding how a candidate is portrayed. Some of these are specific to individual races and the contexts of the district. Others are more general. Because there is overwhelming overlap between gender and incumbency, gender and party affiliation and gender and the affiliation with the party in power in Washington, the results are further confounded by the sample itself. It is worth repeating that the sample features no Democratic incumbents, no male challengers, no male Democrats, no races in which a challenger wins and no races in which a Democrat wins. In fact, the only candidate who is not either a Republican man or a Democratic woman is Virginia Foxx.

I will outline a few potential explanations, other than gender, that could explain the disparities in candidate gender portrayals seen in the results.

Party

One rival hypothesis is that partisanship—and not gender—is to explain for the differences seen between men and women candidates in my study. In terms of gender composition of content in my findings, this would imply that Democrats are more likely to feature women in content—to target women as a group and/or because they had more women

that were easily accessible to photograph, whereas Republicans are more likely to feature men for one or both of those reasons. Virginia Foxx's campaign is the outlier among the other female candidates in terms of gender composition in content. She was the only female candidate to produce more content featuring a majority of men than a majority of women. Democrats had a slightly higher average percentage of content featuring a majority of women than female candidates overall did. Additionally, Democratic candidates had a lower percentage of content featuring a majority of men than female candidates as a whole did. The aforementioned results are simply calculations of the three Democratic women including or excluding Foxx. As expected, a much lower percentage of Foxx's content (17%) featured a majority of women than the all-female average (40%). In fact, Foxx is more in line with the male candidate average (18%) here. Furthermore, a significantly higher proportion of Foxx's content (38%) featured a majority of men than her Democratic female counterparts (12.83%). Foxx again seems to be more in line with Republican (45%) and male (48.5%) averages here.

While using Foxx—the one outlier in terms of gender and partisan affiliation in the study—to highlight situations where party is more predictive than gender is convenient, doing so has limits. Despite the obvious fact that Foxx is just one candidate, the lack of competitiveness of the district she represents means that she has no portrayals of her opponent in campaign content at all. This is obviously limiting, because Foxx's status as a Republican woman gives no insight on if the findings suggest the differences in the way that campaigns attack their opponents is more related to gender, incumbency or party identification. However, we can still evaluate the role of non-attack video ads in campaign voiceovers with Foxx in mind. Republican campaigns (at an average of 2.67 times) were more likely than Democratic campaigns (.67 times on average) to feature a non-candidate male as the narrator in any advertisement. Interestingly, all of

the Democratic ads featuring a male narrator were attack advertisements and none of the Republican uses of male voiceovers were attacks. Both of Virginia Foxx’s video ads featured a male voiceover. These findings suggest that Republicans—even more so than candidates as a whole—are especially likely to give authority to men with a narrator role in video ads, even though Republicans (1.33 times per campaign) were also more likely to use a female narrator in attack ads than Democratic candidates (.67 times per campaign).

The association with candidate portrayal and partisan affiliation is especially strong in the area where one would most expect: on issues that seem to be in line with one party’s policy stances and identity issues. Appeals to patriotism were made an average of 5.33 times for each Republican candidate and 2.33 times for each Democrat. Democrats discussed healthcare an average of 5.33 times per candidate, whereas Republicans discussed healthcare just .67 times per candidate. Pelosi was criticized an average of 1.67 times by Republicans and an average of .33 times by Democrats. Interestingly, Virginia Foxx criticized Pelosi thrice, as much as her Republican male counterparts did combined. This perhaps speaks to how women may be perceived as less of a bully when attacking women than when men are when they do so, incentivizing female candidates to attack powerful women when it is advantageous and encouraging men to refrain from doing so. Trump and policies that are associated with him—such as the 2017 tax bill or building “the wall”—were referred to favorably an average of 5.33 times per each Republican candidate and none by Democrats. The fact that all Democratic candidates and no Republican candidates prominently wore the color pink also bolsters the hypothesis that candidate decisions are more determined by party than gender.

Incumbency Status

While the findings support that the relationship between party affiliation and candidate portrayal is strong, there is a compelling argument that incumbency status is even more related to candidate portrayal. Considering that all of the races studied featured a Democratic challenger who lost to a Republican incumbent, data on incumbency status and party affiliation are one and the same for candidates in this study. While this is a challenge, I think it is clear that some differences are more likely to be related to party affiliation (e.g. portrayals on policy issues) whereas others (e.g. likelihood of attacking opponent) are more related to incumbency status. Some variables are not quite as clear but I have placed them in the category where I believe they make the most sense.

Incumbents (3.33 times on average) were attacked more frequently than opponents (2 times on average). With the exception of the Holding vs. Coleman race—in which both candidates attacked each other thrice—opponents attacked incumbents more often in each race. This is an expected finding, as incumbents have more of a record to attack and challengers have less to lose by going negative.

Challengers (2.67 times per candidate) were more likely than incumbents (.33 times per candidate) to be featured as the narrator in an advertisement. With no appearances as a narrator, Virginia Foxx brought down the female campaign average to 2. The male average was .5, with one narration from Ted Budd. I speculate that challengers are featured as narrators more frequently because constituents are less familiar with them and their story. Using the candidate as a narrator is a way for a campaign to introduce the candidate and their message to voters.

The male and female averages (at 9 and 9.75 times respectively) are similarly high for portrayals of the candidate as looking out for the best interest of constituents. However, the Democratic average (at 11.66 times) is notably much higher than the Republican average (at 7.33

times), suggesting little relationship with candidate gender on the topic. The higher frequency of challengers portraying themselves as looking out for constituents might suggest that the challengers are capitalizing on the belief that the incumbent and/or the party in power is not doing a good job of looking out for constituents.

Party in Power

Complicating matters even more, being affiliated with the party in power (Republicans) breaks down the candidates in the exact same way that partisanship and incumbency did. It makes sense why running as a member of the party in power would look different than running as a member of the party in the minority. One has a reason to talk up Donald Trump, his policies and the direction the country is going in; the other has every reason to attack the president and present a better vision for the country.

Democrats (at an average of 13.67 times per candidate) used change as a theme in their content much more than Republicans (3.67 times on average) and even more frequently than female candidates (at an average of 10.5 times). Republican female Virginia Foxx used change as a theme in her content just one time, once again skewing the female average.

The fact that the non-incumbent average for portrayals as an outsider (2.67) is higher than the female average (2) and much higher than the incumbent average (.33) is somewhat intuitive. However, I think this also speaks to how candidates who are not affiliated with the party in power have an incentive to capitalize on their outsider status, especially when the party in power has a low approval rating.

Democrats were much more likely to portray themselves as empathetic or willing to listen to constituents (6.67 times on average) than Republican candidates (1.33 times on

average). While it could be true that the Democratic Party is more associated with softness and empathy whereas Republicans are more associated with toughness and rules, it is also likely that Democrats in these races portrayed themselves as empathetic to contrast themselves with both the party in power and the incumbent. Virginia Foxx again skews the female average down to 5.5 on portrayals as empathetic; the male average is one.

While the findings suggest that Republicans are more likely to give authority to men via voiceovers in positive advertisements about the candidate—suggesting that Republicans are using stereotypes about men in authority positions to their advantage—there is another possible explanation for this trend. Perhaps the incumbents in this study used male voiceovers to signal keeping the status quo by using the voice of a man to represent how politics have traditionally been.

Conclusion

All of these factors—candidate gender, incumbency status, which party is in power and party affiliation—interact and influence the way that candidates are portrayed by their campaigns. While it is impossible to prove a causal relationship without interviews to back up the findings, I can speculate on which factors are likely related to which findings. However, the small size and homogeneity (at least in terms of party/gender/incumbency combinations) of my sample makes it even more challenging to speculate on how findings are related to a particular factor. More likely than not, candidate gender is a factor taken into consideration by campaigns, but it is just one factor thought of in the context of a multitude of other variables. This would confirm the findings of Dittmar. The list of variables I highlighted in this section does not even touch on the two most important factors: the context of the district the candidate is running in

and the candidate herself. Hopefully further research can study campaign content in a wider variety of races and back these findings with interviews.

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APPENDIX

Codebook for Quantitative Content Analysis**Presentation**

1. Are the candidate's children in the advertisement or are their children mentioned in the advertisement?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Inconclusive
2. Is the candidate's spouse in the advertisement or are they mentioned in the advertisement?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Inconclusive
3. Is
4. Is the candidate wearing pink prominently?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Unknown/Inconclusive
 4. N/A
5. Is the candidate wearing an outfit that would be acceptable to wear on the floor of the House of Representatives?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Inconclusive
 - D. N/A

Messaging

6. What is the gender makeup of the people in the content?
 1. 60%+ female
 2. 40-60% female
 3. 60%+ male
 4. N/A—there is no one in the content
 5. Just the candidate
7. Excluding the candidate, is the voiceover a male or female voice?
 - A. Voiceover. Male voice
 - B. Voiceover. Female voice
 - C. Inconclusive or mixed
 - D. N/A
 - E. Candidate

8. Is immigration mentioned in the context of being a crime and national security issue?
 - A. Yes, and the candidate is portrayed as being supportive of the belief that immigration is a crime or national security issue
 - B. Yes, and the candidate is portrayed as being against the belief that immigration is a crime or national security issue
 - C. Yes, and it's mixed or inconclusive if the candidate believes that immigration is a crime or national security issue
 - D. No
9. Is immigration mentioned in the context of being a humanitarian issue?
 - A. Yes, and the candidate is portrayed as believing that immigration is a humanitarian issue
 - B. Yes, and the candidate is portrayed as believing that immigration is not a humanitarian issue
 - C. Yes, and it is inconclusive or mixed if the candidate is portrayed as believing that immigration is a humanitarian issue
 - D. No
10. Is healthcare mentioned?
 - A. Yes, and the candidate is portrayed as being against Republican or President Trump's healthcare policies and/or for the Affordable Care Act and Democratic healthcare policies
 - B. Yes, and the candidate is portrayed as being for Republican or President Trump's healthcare policies and/or against the Affordable Care Act and Democratic healthcare policies
 - C. Yes, and it is inconclusive or mixed if the candidate is supportive of Democratic or Republican healthcare policy
 - D. No